

Do you help others with Unemployment Insurance?

Here's what you need to know

Sometimes a person needs a helper for Unemployment Insurance benefits. The person who receives benefits – called the “claimant” – may need help to file a claim, claim weekly benefits, or get answers to questions. A helper may be a friend, relative, attorney, or other advocate.

The claimant may have trouble using our Telephone Claims Center or web site for many reasons, such as:

- They don't speak English well;
- They don't understand English;
- They don't read well; or
- They have a disability, such as hearing loss or a speech problem.

The New York State Department of Labor has taken steps to help everyone use our services. These include providing language translation services and services for people with disabilities.

This fact sheet is for people who help another person with their Unemployment Insurance benefits. It tells how you can help, what you can and cannot do, and how we handle privacy issues.

What you can do as a helper

You can get information for a claimant, translate it, and help the claimant file a claim for and claim weekly benefits.

You must remember that you should act only as a go-between for the claimant and Department of Labor staff. Do not argue a point of view for a claimant or answer questions for a claimant without asking them first.

The claimant should do anything he or she can. This includes talking with Telephone Claims Center staff.

Privacy and the claimant's Personal Identification Number (PIN)

The claimant must create a PIN to apply for Unemployment Insurance benefits. They must use that PIN to claim weekly benefits.

If a claimant cannot enter his or her own PIN, he or she may tell you their PIN. **However, the claimant must be with you every time you contact the Telephone Claims Center or use the web site for them.**

When you call the Telephone Claims Center, the operator will first ask to speak with the claimant. They will ask for the claimant's permission to speak with you. They will then ask you these questions:

- What is your name?
- What is your relationship to the claimant?
- How did you get the PIN?
- What services did you use with the PIN?

Your answers will be recorded.

The operator will tell the claimant that they are responsible for what their helper does. The operator will remind both of you that the claimant's PIN is their electronic signature.

This means that the claimant must be with you when you do anything regarding their claim.

If you call the Telephone Claims Center when the claimant is not with you, the staff will tell you they cannot speak to you. Privacy rules do not allow them to give claim information to anyone but the claimant. That is the law.



How to Contact the New York State Department of Labor

To apply for Unemployment Insurance benefits:

Go to our website at <http://labor.ny.gov/unemploymentassistance.shtm>.

Or call toll-free **(888) 209-8124** from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday – Friday.

If you use TTY/TDD, call a relay operator at **(800) 662-1220** and ask the operator to call **(888) 783-1370**.

If you use a Video Relay System or another type of relay service, contact your relay operator and ask the relay operator to call **(888) 783-1370**.

To claim weekly benefits (also called certify for benefits):

Go to our web site at www.labor.ny.gov/signin.

Or, call toll-free **(888) 581-5812**.

If you are hearing impaired and use TTY/TDD, call **(877) 205-3119**.

If you use a Video Relay System or another type of relay service, contact your relay operator and ask the relay operator to call **(888) 783-1370**.

If you have general questions about Unemployment Insurance:

Check the claimant handbook that you received in the mail or go online to www.labor.ny.gov/uihandbook.

Check the Frequently Asked Questions on our website at <http://labor.ny.gov/ui/faq.shtm>.

If you have a specific question about your claim:

Send us a secure message. Sign in to your online account at www.labor.ny.gov/signin. Click on the envelope icon at the upper right of your My Online Services page. Compose and send your message.

Call our Telephone Claims Center toll-free at **(888) 209-8124**. At the Main Menu, press 5 to ask a question about a claim you have already filed. If call volume is heavy, you may be placed on hold or offered a call back.

If you are hearing impaired and use TTY/TDD, call a relay operator at **(800) 662-1220** and ask the operator to call **(888) 783-1370**.

If you use a Video Relay System or another type of relay service, contact your relay operator and ask the relay operator to call **(888) 783-1370**.

If you have a question about your NY.gov ID, call **(800) 833-3000** between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Press option 2 to speak to a representative at the Department of Labor Contact Center.

If you do not speak English well:

Call our Telephone Claims Center toll-free at **(888) 209-8124**. Listen to the first message about languages available, then press the number for your language.